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NEW JERSEY'S SPLENDID DIRECT PRIMARY PLAN EXPLAINED FOR BENEFIT OF HAWAIIAN VOTERS

Allan Herbert Tells of Law
Which Has Revolutionized
Wilson State Politics

In the first article of the series of two, published last week, Mr. Allan Herbert discussed New Jersey's public utilities commission plan. In the following article he discusses the same state's splendid direct primary law. It will be found of particular interest to Hawaii at this time.

The former direct primary law only provided for the nomination of municipal officers, assemblymen and senators by the people. Now it has been extended to every elective office, including the governor, congressmen, members of the county and state committees, and delegates to the national convention.

The State conventions of both parties are held at the same time, one week after the primaries. Instead of being composed of delegates selected by no one knows whom, they are made up simply of the candidates named by the primaries. Those nominated for senators and assemblymen with the hold-over senators of each party constitute the members of each convention. The governor is a member of the convention of his own party. By this plan the number of delegates in each of our State conventions is cut down from nearly one thousand to less than eighty.

Presidential Preference primaries are provided. New Jersey was the first Eastern State to adopt this kind of primary.

Candidates for the Legislature must file with the County Clerk one of two statements: either that the candidate will vote for that nominee for the United States Senate who receives the highest number of votes in the candidate's party in the primary preceding the election of a United States Senator; or that he shall consider the vote of the people for United States Senator as a recommendation, which as a member of the Legislature he may disregard if he sees sufficient reason for so doing.

Personal Registration Required. Personal registration is required in Municipalities containing more than five thousand people. No one is allowed to vote at the primary until he registers for the general election. Registration involves the answering of a series of questions by the voter regarding his identity. Voters who can write must sign their statements. If a voter cannot write he must make a

secret, confidential statement, in the presence of his signature. The same day, these ballots are mailed to each voter, but these ballots cannot be voted. Ballots to be voted at the primaries are given to the citizens at the primary polling places on primary day by the election officers. None of these ballots is allowed outside the polling place.

The same process is used in regard to the distribution of ballots before and at the general election. On election day the voter must sign his name on the pollbook that it may be compared with the signature on the registration book. He must sign before he receives a ballot. Illiterate voters who cannot write must have someone else answer to questions concerning their identity and the answers are compared with those which were made when they registered.

Separate Party Ballots. At the primaries there are separate ballots for each party. At the general election the single or blanket ballot is used. Party emblems are abolished. The voter votes for individual candidates whose names appear in alphabetical order, with the party to which each belongs indicated by its name, at the right. He must vote a ballot, not a ticket.

The new Election Law is strongly reinforced by the Corrupt Practices Act. All committees designated by candidates showing every receipt and expense are required to file itemized statements and each candidate must file a sworn statement of his personal contributions. There is also a limit to the amount which candidates may spend, in seeking nomination and elections. This varies according to the salary paid by the office. Any candidate who fails to comply with this feature of the law must forfeit the office to which he shall be elected.

All campaign literature must bear the inscription of the writer's name. No money may be spent for transporting voters to the polls, unless they are physically unable to go, in which case the expense is paid by the county.

There are various specific acts designated which constitute violations of the law. Candidates are protected from solicitations of private individuals for churches, clubs, charitable institutions, and other organizations. Corporation contributions in any form are positively forbidden. Pay envelopes must not bear political inscriptions. No political hand-bills containing threats of coercive statements can be posted in factories under penalty of forfeiture of the charters possessed by the corporations guilty of such misdemeanor. Any person violating this provision is also guilty of a misdemeanor.

Secrecy Of Ballot Guarded.

The secrecy of the ballot is strongly safeguarded. The records of corruption in the conduct of elections in this State in previous years have been most disgraceful and extraordinary. Accordingly, the new law makes fraudulent voting and ballot-box stuffing practically impossible. The destruction of records in the recent Atlantic County election frauds, where Judge Samuel Kalich, appointed by Governor Wilson, the first Hebrew in the State, ever elevated to the Supreme Court Bench, so admirably applied the law to the offenders, led to most stringent legislation for the punishment of such notorious lawbreakers in future. Altogether, with these measures of protection we are pretty well entrenched against repeaters and crooks of all classes. Already it has been discovered in carrying over the primary registry lists from 1910 that thousands of voters, who resided on vacant lots at that time, have moved away, evidently because they did not like the new election laws; or possibly because New Jersey winters are getting colder. Wagonloads of "spoiled" ballots mailed to "spoiled" voters have been returned to the post-offices. "One thing is sure," as the governor says, "only flesh-and-blood men will vote in this State, in future."

Another step forward in progressive legislation was taken by the enactment of a statute which gives cities and municipalities of the state the privilege of adopting the commission form of government, under what was known originally as the "Galveston

Plan," which provides for the complete abolishment of nomination of candidates by parties by political parties; the abolition of ward boundary lines; the merging of the legislative commission; the right of the recall of elective officers; and the initiative and referendum.

Many Other Reforms.

Add to this list of reforms the regulation of cold-storage, the substitution of indeterminate sentences for criminal offenses, the rectification of abuses in connection with false weights and measures, the reorganization of the state's school system, the abolition of contract labor in our penal institutions, the legislation in the interest of the blind, the regulation of the age, employment, safety, health, and work-hours of persons employed in mercantile establishments, an act for the safeguarding of business buildings against fire; a law compelling all railroad corporations to pay their employees twice monthly, and a law extending the civil service to employees of the state, counties, and municipalities, and we have one of the most remarkable records of legislation that has ever distinguished a single legislative session in this country.

Was not New Jersey really the first of the three Eastern States "to get out of the hole?" Did not J. Lincoln Steffen's prophecy come true?

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Direct wireless communication has been established between Colon, at the Panama canal, and Washington. If the combined present demands of engineers, firemen and trainmen on 52 eastern railroads are granted it will add \$20,000,000 to the payroll of the railroad companies.



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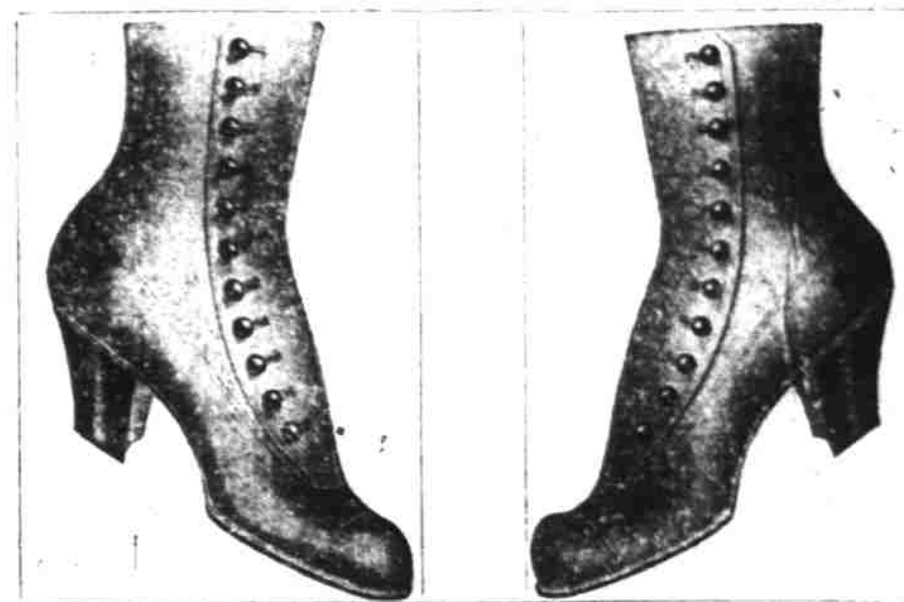
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